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Author Sadi', Sheikh

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FLOWERS

FROM

THE BŪSTĀN

A FEW FLOWERS

FROM THE GARDEN OF

SHEIKH SAADI SHIRAZI

BEING

Translations into English Verse

OF PORTIONS OF

THE BŪSTĀN.

CALCUTTA:

THACKER, SPINK, AND CO.

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1877.

TO
MY WIFE.

“Surely God’s favour is on him bestowed
Whose wife makes glad and prosperous his abode.”

CHAPTER VII., *Story 2nd.*

PREFACE.



THE writer offers to the public, with much hesitation, this amusement of his leisure. Although his halting lines but ill represent Saadi's terse and eloquent verses, he thinks they will be found to be fairly literal translations ; he hopes for lenient criticism on his attempt to render, in a form possibly more pleasant for general reading than the usual student's literal translation, the high ideas and teachings of a favourite Persian poet, whose writings are as "household words" in every educated Mahommedan family.

W. M.

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ERRATA.

~~In Dedication, for "prosperous" read "prospers."~~
~~Page 25 line 19 for "ease" read "ease."~~
~~" 28 " 18 for "last" " "lost."~~
~~" 39 " 8 for "ease" " "rose."~~
~~" 39 " 10 for "anger" " "sugar."~~
~~" 48 " 18 for "low" " "poor."~~
~~" 61 " 11 for "religious" read "religiouss."~~

Flowers from the Bostan.



INTRODUCTION.

IN THE NAME OF GOD THE MERCIFUL, THE FORGIVING.

HIS holy name be praised, All Powerful,
Who gave us speech, Creator, Merciful,
The Lord, The Giver, Helper, who receives
Our frequent weak excuses, and forgives.
The hapless wanderer, who turns his face
From the Beloved One's open door of grace,
Where'er he goes will find no resting place.
The proudest monarch, in His presence dread,
In humble supplication bows his head :
He judges not the rebel hastily,
Nor him who makes excuses drives away ;
Both worlds are drops in the ocean of His might,
He sees our faults but hides them out of sight ;
Though His just wrath our wickedness resent,
He blotteth out our sins when we repent.

Upon that son who makes domestic brawls,
A father's heavy anger justly falls ;
When relatives in concert do not live,
They separate, and rarely they forgive ;
And when companions cannot agree,
One from the other miles away will flee ;
Men favour not their slaves in toil remiss,
And Generals deserters will dismiss ;
But He, the Lord of heaven and earth, hath ne'er
Withheld from sinful man his daily fare.
The earth's wide surface is His banquet hall
For friend and foe, prepared alike for all ;
So spreads His bounty that Simurgh,¹ who makes
His home in lonely Qaf, a share partakes.
Who could escape His fearful wrath if He
Should condescend to practise tyranny ?
His nature free from taint of earth, His reign
Needs no obedience from gods or men/
All things created, man, the insect swarm,
Are ministers His orders to perform ✓
To one His favour gives a kingly crown,
Another to the dust He bringeth down ;

¹ Simurgh, a huge bird, believed to haunt the mountain Qaf or Caucasus.

On this the robe of happiness bestows,
And that in misery's torn blanket clothes;
The fire a garden for His friend ¹ became,
He led a host ² through water to the flame;
The wrath, the mercy, deeds so differing, still
Both bare the impress of his mighty will.
The Cherubim and Seraphim become,
When He unsheathes His sword, both deaf and
dumb;
And Satan even, forgetting his despair,
When He shows mercy hopeth for a share.
The humble-minded finds His mercy near,
The suppliant a listener to his prayer.
Th^t eternal Father with His pen of doom
Inscribes man's form and fortune in the womb;
Again He hideth in the silent grave,
And brings to judgment those t'whom life He gave.
The heavenly orbs march on at His command,
And o'er the raging seas He spreads the land;

¹ Abraham. It is believed that the furnace into which Abraham was thrown by Nimrod was transformed into a garden.

² Alluding to Pharaoh's army drowned in the Red Sea (the Nile in the Persian) and condemned to Hell.

The earth convulsed and tórn by earthquakes dire,
With mountains, as with nails, He made secure
No grain of science can be hid from Him,
For known and unknown are alike to Him ;
At His command, from nothing beings spring—
Who else from naught could make a living thing ?
The world His Godhead owns with one consent,
Amazed, bewildered, by its vast extent ;
Man's reason cannot gauge His majesty,
Nor human eye His awful beauty see ;
The bird of fancy in its wildest flight,
Hath never mounted to His Godhead's height,
And subtle intellect, though it may strive,
Beyond the skirts of praise can ne'er arrive
This maelstrom infinite devours the mind
Like foundered ships which leave no trace behind.
How many nights I've tried with sleepless eyes
To thread this maze, to solve these mysteries,
When wonder plucked my sleeve, and cried, Awake
These idle dreams, these vain attempts forsake ;
The universe is circled by His law,
Can'st thou, a point, round it a circle draw ?
Saadi, think not there is a path to God
Except that one which great Mohammed trod,

Chief of the prophets, Guide in the way of peace,
God's faithful agent, Gabraïl's mouthpiece,
Our Intercessor when the dead shall rise,
Chief of the Court that our offences tries ;
How can the humble Saadi praises frame ?
A.thousand blessings on thy honoured name.





SCHEME OF BOOK.

I'VE wandered oft, through every land and clime,
Each race I've seen, with all have passed my time,
Kindness I found from all men far and near,
From every harvest I have gleaned an ear ;
Shiraz, God's blessing ever on thee rest,
Thy men so good, of all I've seen the best ;
I thought of visiting both Sham and Room,
Their kindness chained me to their happy home,
I thought it pity if from this fair land
Homewards I turned with nothing in my hand/
From Egypt travellers choice sweetmeats bring,
And rarities to please their friends they bring,
I, though I ^{have} ~~bring~~ not sweets and spices rare,
~~Have~~ pleasing rhymes, than sugar sweeter far ;
Not sweets material which men can eat,
But wisdom deep which sages love to meet.
When I this Treasury began to build,
I made ten doors, each with instruction filled.



DOOR
CHAPTER I.

ON JUSTICE AND GOVERNING.



STORY I.

JUST Nausherwan, I've heard, when near to death
To Hoormuz said, with last and faltering breath,—
Be always mindful of the poor, my son,
Not of thyself, but others think upon ;
How can a thoughtful man his patience keep,
The watch asleep, the wolf among the sheep ?
Think of the needy, nor their wants disown,
But for the people, where would be the crown ?
The people are the root, the king the tree,
The tree, my son, should firmly rooted be ;
Wound not thy subjects' hearts, for if you do,
Reckless you shake your own foundation too ;
Look not for peace and plenty in that land
Whose people groan beneath a tyrant's hand ;

The audacious proud and overbearing, fear ;
The man who fears not God, of him beware ;
His injured country rich the tyrant deems,
It cannot be, it seems so in his dreams ;
Ruin and shame by violence are sown,
This saying to the thoughtful man is known ;
Crush not thy subjects with injustice, they
Support and shelter thee in sovereignty ;
Your tenants in your interests engage,
A cheerful labourer earns double wage ;
Wrong to a man nor manly is nor wise,
For some day you may fall and he may rise.

STORY II.

ALL actions 'gainst the law, though small they seem,
Even drinking water, wrong and sinful deem,
But if the law demands it, in God's sight,
Killing and shedding blood are just and right,
And when our holy law says, Kill ! beware
And hang not back, strike sure and have no fear ;
If any of his family you know
Be merciful to them, compassion show

The tyrant justly forfeited his life,
Seek not revenge from helpless child and wife
Lusty you are, your army at your back,
Still hesitate your foeman's land to attack,
He fortifies himself, resists you long,
The harmless country suffers all the wrong ;
Your prisoners see, to hear their tales incline,
Perhaps some innocent among them pine,
Whene'er a trader in thy country dies
Touch not his goods, such would be mean, unwise
His mourning relatives would justly say,
Venting on you their righteous enmity,
" Our poor friend perished in a far-off land,
Upon his goods the tyrant laid his hand ; "
Think of his orphaned child's despairing groan,
His widow's sigh gone up to God's high throne.
Often the fruit of years, a man's good name,
Is dissipated by one act of shame ;
Good men who wish to be remembered long
Protect the people's goods against the strong ;
Who seizes property that is not his,
Though lord of all the earth, a beggar is
The generous man may die of want, obscure,
Sure his reward, he never wronged the poor.

STORY III.

THERE lived a king, I've heard, for justice famed,
Who wore a dress of coarse material framed ;
" Illustrious king ! this robe (a courtier said)
Doth not beseem thee, wear a rich brocade ;"
Answered the king, (his words so wise and true,
Contain good counsel both for me and you) ;
" This coat for use and ease sufficeth me,
A costlier but for ornament would be.
Why should my subjects 'neath their taxes groan
That I may ornament myself my throne ;
Jewelled and scented like a wanton gay,
How drive the enemy, like chaff, away ;
If greed increased in me a hundred fold
Still not my own would I my treasure hold
Our money on our army should be spent,
Not on our pleasure and our ornament ;
~~Our soldiers, discontented with their lot,~~
~~Will not protect the country as they ought ;~~
Why should the king both tax and tithe consume
And not protect the farmer in his home ?
The king devotes to pomp and state the tax,
The spoiler wrecks the farm, the hoard exacts,

The wretched farmer injured on each side,—
Beneath such rule can happiness abide ?
~~Ungenerous 'tis t'oppress a fallen man,~~
The mean cock snatches from the ant the grain
A cherished subject is a fruitful tree,
Eat of its fruit and really happy be
Hurt not its root or branch with unkind blow,
Only a fool himself would injure so,
Who bear not heavily upon the poor
The fruits of youth and fortune will secure
When the unhappy into trouble fall,
Beware, for God's sake ; listen to their call
Invasion's wicked tide when backward hurled,
In thy foe's country be thy flag unfurled ;
T'insure a peace both dignified and long
Annex a part ; the people do not wrong,
Be ever merciful as thou art strong ;
For if with guiltless blood the earth is stained,
The lordship of the world is dearly gained.

STORY IV.

So sore a famine on Damascus fell
That lovers e'en their love forgot to tell ;
The heavens so miserly, no drop of rain
Came to refresh the thirsty trees and plain ;
Dried up the ancient founts well known for years,
No water left to flow save orphans' tears ;
Perchance you might from some poor hearth espy
A wreath of smoke ascending to the sky,
It was not smoke, it was a widow's sigh ;
Leafless the trees, like poor men naked, stand,
Withered the strong man's strength, the mighty hand ;
From hill and glade the leafy glories gone,
Locusts the gardens eat, the locusts man.
Amidst this fearful scene, a friend passed by,
Emaciated, worn with poverty ;
Shocked and surprised, (I knew him prosperous,
The lord of wealth, respected, generous),
I said, " Old courteous friend, distressed, I see,
Some great misfortune hath befallen thee."
Frowning, he answered ; " Man devoid of sense !
Thy sinful question lacks intelligence,

Look round, our dreadful sufferings survey,
Our load unbearable of misery,
No rain drops, tears of mercy, from the skies
Descend in answer to our heavy sighs.”
I said, “At least *you* have no cause to fear,
The poison killeth where no cure is near;
The poor may die, but why do you complain?
The duck fears nothing from the pelting rain.”
Vexed to the heart the good man turned on me,
Pitying my meanness, half contemptuously;
“How can a man, though safe on shore he be,
Unmoved his drowning neighbours’ struggles see?
I am not pale and thin from want of food,
Grief for the poor and hungry chills my blood.
The wise and generous feel unhappiness
More for their neighbours’ than their own distress,
Although, thank God, I am from danger free
I tremble when their misery I see
Embittered is the ease of him in health
Watching the bed of sickness and of death
To him no pleasure brings his garden’s bloom,
Its leafy bowers, the rose’s sweet perfume,
Whose neighbours languish in a prison’s gloom.

STORY V.

THE soldier who has once his courage shown—
~~Increase~~ his pay, the gain you'll quickly own,
~~Again he'll hold his life of little worth,~~
~~Nor shrink from greatest odds in your behalf ;~~
Thy soldiers keep content in time of peace,
In time of ~~trouble they will be of use ;~~
Now, when secure, thy men conciliate,
Not when the foe is thundering at thy gate ;
The soldier poor, his services held light,
Why waste his life for you in day of fight ?
Thy borders from the treacherous foe protect,
To pay thy soldiers well! do not neglect.
That king shall rule his foes with iron hand
Whose soldiers satisfied around him stand ;
The soldier gives you for his wage his head,
It is not just that he should want for bread ;
You, wealthy, grudge your men their scanty pay,
They'll grudge their services to you some day ;
In war's rude shock how can a man be bold
When biting want has made his heart grow cold ?



DOOR
CHAPTER II.

KINDNESS.



STORY I.

I'VE heard that for a week no traveller came
To taste the hospitality of Abraham ;
The saint in eating could no pleasure feel
Unless some weary wanderer shared the meal :
Outside his tent he went, and gazed around,
The dismal valley searched, and there he found
One lonely in life's desert, bent with care,
The snow of age upon his head and hair.
~~With welcome warm he thus accosted him—~~
~~As is the custom among generous men ;~~
“ My honoured friend, a kindness do I pray,
From eating bread and salt turn not away,”
Oft had the old man heard of Abraham,
The friend of God, God's mercy rest with him

He got up quickly, and towards the tent,
Happy and pleased his weary footsteps bent ;
~~Th~~ attendants vieing who should serve him best
With honour seated the respected guest,
Prepared the feast ; the neighbours far and near
Were summoned to partake the princely cheer
Hushed is each voice, and lowly bowed each head
When thanks to God for his good gifts are said ;
From all around responsive, thanks are heard,
The old man silent uttered not a word ;
Surprised, they said, “ Old man, we do not see
The warm devotion that beseemeth thee ;
Is it not right when we our portion eat
To invoke His name, the Giver of the meat ? ”
He said, “ I, Sirs, this custom do not know,
Great Zoroaster has not taught us so
The prophet heard, kindled his soul with ire,
Instead of God the last man worshipped fire !
Unclean, disgraced, they drove him from the door,
Foul is the unbeliever to the pure.
To Abraham from God Almighty came
A message awe-inspiring charged with blame,
“ I gave the old man life and food for years,—
Your kindness in a moment disappears

To fire, untaught, in prayer he lifts his hand, ~~//~~
You, knowing good, from good withdraw your hand.

The poor old man ! go quickly, bid him stay,
Kind words from me his God and thine convey ;

See ! weeping, prostrate in the dust he lies,
And all unknowingly to Me he cries."

The prophet of the age, obedient,

To call him from that dreadful ["]desert went ;

When he came near to him these words he said,

" A thousand blessings on thy favoured head,

The true and only God accepts thy prayer,

Believe in Him, His boundless mercy share."

The old man heard, religious glorious light

Pierced through the veil that dimmed his mental
sight ;

~~He, praised be God, became a Mussulman,~~

~~Though poor on earth, an heir to wealth unknown.~~

STORY II.

A BEGGAR once bewailed his wretched state
Before a surly-hearted rich man's gate,
Who gave no help, nor kindly bade him stay,
But drove him with a bitter curse away ;
The traveller's heart at such unkindness bled,
He, wondering, lifted up his eyes and said,
" How dares a man, though rich, to speak this way,
Does he not fear that he may want some day ? "
Short sighted man ! with insult and disgrace
His slave the suppliant hunted from the place.
Time passed away, and Fortune ceased to shine
On him, unthankful for her gifts divine ;
His circumstances changed, his riches fled,
Naked and destitute he begged for bread ;
His slave was purchased by a master, kind,
Enlightened, liberal both in hand and mind ;
To give afforded him that pleasure keen
A poor man feels from riches unforeseen.
One night a weary footsore beggar stood
Before the good man's door and asked for food

The slave, obedient to ~~th'~~ accustomed word,
Took up a portion from the ample board,
Went out to hear the poor man's tale of grief,
And cheer and comfort him, and give relief.
One look ! one cry ! he hastened back dismayed,
The tell-tale tears his troubled mind betrayed ;
His master, courteous both to high and low,
Asked whose unkindness caused these tears to flow ;
He said, " My heart doth bitterly lament
The state of this unhappy mendicant ;
I was his humble slave in days of old,
He, lord of property and wealth untold,
His hand drawn back from ease and dignity
Is now stretched out in want and penury."
The good man laughed, and said, " No wrong is here,
On none does Fortune with injustice bear,
This is that miser who puffed up with pride
The cares and wants of fellow men denied,
He drove me hungry from before his face,
Fate retributive puts him in my place ;
The kindly heavens smiled once more on me,
Washed from my cheek the signs of misery ;
God's wisdom infinite may one door close
His tender love another open shows ;

The meek and humble oft He satisfies,
And oft the rich and haughty He denies."

STORY III.

WANDERING abroad one day I met a man,
Close at his heels a sheep obedient ran ;
I said, " What have you tied him with, a noose,
That makes the creature follow you so close ? "
Quickly he loosed the collar and the chain,
Ran right and left, in front and back again,
The sheep skipped after him, as if to eat
Some grain from out his hand, or clover sweet ;
The frolic over, he returned to me,
And said, " Oh ! thoughtful courteous Sir, you see
'Tis not a rope that brings him to my beck,
But kindness is the noose around his neck.
Since maddened elephants their keepers spare,
Remembering former kindnesses and care ;
Then, good man, even to the bad do good, ~~for~~
A dog will guard you when he eats your food.

STORY IV.

THERE lived a holy man whose fame had spread,
In books of pious learning deeply read ;
I and some needy wanderers like me
Set out resolved to see this devotee ;
When we arrived he kissed our hands and
feet,
Gave us with courtesy the highest seat ;
We saw his wealth, but found him destitute
Of kindness, as a barren tree of fruit ;
A specious hypocrite, glib-tongued and bold,
~~His manner~~ warm, his kitchen very cold
He roared out prayers from eve till morning
light,
We, tired and hungry, sleepless passed the
night ;
He got up early, girt himself, and then
The humbug of the former day began.
~~One of my fellow travellers thus spoke,~~
A genial man he was, and loved his joke,
“ Pray do not fawn on me, but give me bread,
And, if you wish it, hit me on the head ;

Change me some letters, and for flattery
 Show me the inside of your buttery."¹
 The generous, not the hypocrite excel
 Wary and cold like Tartar sentinel ;
 Nobility to him who gives will come
 And useless words are like a hollow drum ;
 The man who does kind deeds without pretence
 In heaven above shall have his recompense,
~~By actions shall a man his claim support~~
~~Words without actions are a poor support.~~

STORY V.

A RICH man once, his head with pride elate,
 Thrust forth a helpless beggar from his gate ;
 The poor man shrunk into a corner near,
 His aching heart sighed out his deep despair ;
 A kindly blind man happened to pass by
 And asked the reason of this heavy sigh ;

¹ The traveller wishes the stingy Darvesh to alter the diacritical points, and thus change "kocha" (kissing) into "tacha" (provisions).

He said, while down his cheeks the tear-drops stole,
“ This proud man’s harshness cuts me to the soul ; ”
The blind man answered, “ Friend, do not despair,
Remain with me this night, my supper share ; ”
He soothed his grief, kindly did him entreat,
And led him home, and gave him food to eat.
Rested and grateful the Darvesh that night
Blessed him, and said, May God restore thy sight ;
Some precious drops he sprinkled on his eyes,
Next morn he gazed around in glad surprise
Swiftly throughout the town the rumour spread,
‘ Last night the blind man’s eyes were opened.’
The story reached that surly rich man’s ears
From whom the good Darvesh had turned in tears ;
He sent for him, and asked, “ Oh ! fortunate,
The history of this miracle relate ;
Who opened, and how opened he thine eyes ? ”
He answered, “ Tyrant, man of wasted days,
Short sighted, slow of intellect, thy mind
So grovelling, in naught can goodness find ;
He, in whose face you shut the door of pride,
For me the gates of joy hath opened wide ;
I swear by manliness, each generous deed
Shall bring its recompense in time of need ;

Those who are miserly and blind of heart
In this collyrium have no share or part
The ill starred man received the just rebuke,
Torn with remorse and envy thus he spoke,
“ My falcon rare hath fallen to your net,
Fortune once mine towards you her face hath set ;
How shall a man ride proudly hawk on wrist,
His mind given up, rat-like, to avarice ? ”

STORY VI.

A CERTAIN man had money without end,
But had not pluck to part with it and spend ;
He would not use it and in comfort live,
Nor, fearing he might want, to others give ;
His life was bound up in his darling gold,
Useless, as money in a miser's hold.
His son in ambush watching him one day
Discovered where the old man's treasure lay,
He dug it up and carried it away,
And left a big stone in its place, they say !
The ~~generous~~ youth full soon the money spent,
Lightly it came and speedily it went.

The father clutched his throat with frenzy wild,
The son with harp and lute the hours beguiled ;
The one lamenting sleepless passed the night,
The other laughed when broke the morning light,
And said, " Oh ! father, gold for use was given,
A stone in value equals it if hidden."

Men force the stubborn ore to yield its wealth
That they may give and live in ease and health ;
Gold in his hands who worships it alone
Is still, my brother, locked up in the stone ;
If you, while living, grudge your children bread,
Complain not if they, hungry, wish you dead,
And think if you would only fall down stairs
And break your neck, the money would be
theirs !

The miser watching his beloved hoard
Is like a talisman by man abhorred,
A few years it remaineth in the ground
While ~~the~~ uncanny object hovers round ;
The shaft of death shall strike him unaware,
And others shall in ease his treasure share.
Why ant-like ever toiling, gathering be ?
Enjoy thy wealth before the ant eats thee.

The words of Saadi are as proverbs wise,
Useful to him who in his calling strives.
Alas ! that men from wisdom turn aside,
For in it treasures numberless abide.





CHAPTER. III.

LOVE.



STORY I.

HAPPY are those devoted to their God
Whether He smiles or shakes the threatening rod,
Though destitute, despising kingly state,
Their hope in Him, though poor content to wait;
Often the cup of misery they drain,
And though 'tis bitter they do not complain.
Wine gladdens, but brings troubles in the morn,
The kingly ^{rose} ~~cane~~ is arméd with the thorn.
Their patience brings no sorrow, for His sake
Bitter as ^{sugar} ~~anger~~ from His hand they take;
Entranced with love they heed not taunts and spite,
The frenzied camel deems his burden light.
His prisoners desire not to be loose,
His prey seeks not for freedom from His noose.

Monarchs in solitude, in public poor,
Their feet may wander, but their road is sure ;
Their inner life, their motives, who can see,
Hid like the fount of life in mystery ?
Like David's holy fane they seem to us,
Ruined without, within all glorious ;
The silkworm spins itself a silken frame,
These, like the firefly, burn with inward flame ;
Still seek they Him, though with Him they abide,
Ever athirst, though on the streamlet's side ;
I say not they are powerless to drink,
They crave for water on the river's brink.

STORY II.

THY earthly love befits thee made of clay
And all thine ease and patience takes away ;
Even in thy sleep thy mistress claims thy soul—
Awake, thy thoughts dwell on her cheek and mole.¹
With such devotion at her feet you lie,
The world seems empty when she is not nigh ;

¹ The Persians consider a mole to be a mark of great beauty.

And should the petted beauty gold despise,
Worthless as dust it seemeth in your eyes ;
Your mind can think of nothing but her face,
In it for no one else remains a place ;
You say, my mistress dwelleth in my eyes,
And when I shut them, in my heart she lies !
You fear not being disgraced, and lack the power
Of thought, reflection, for one single hour ;
She asks your life, you her demand allow,
When with the sword she strikes, your head you bow.
When passion, wrath-exciting, based on lust,
Is in man's sight allowed, considered just,
Are you surprised that travellers in His way
Are drowned in the sea of wisdom they survey ?
Their minds absorbed in love, and Him they love,
Far from this life and world are fixed above ;
They fly, in love of God, from human strife,
And drunk, they spill the cup of wine their life ;
Who shall attempt with earthly drugs their cure,
Since no one knows the pain that they endure ?
His words, " Am I your God ? " dwell in the ear,
They shout in answer, " Yea, Lord ! we are here."
Devout they live, in solitude retired,
Still human, but with heavenly love inspired ;

Their faith can move with one word from its place
A mountain, shake a kingdom to its base ;
Swift footed as the wind, unseen, unknown,
Constant in prayer, yet silent as the stone ,
Each morning, the repentant tears they weep
Wash from their eyes the collyrium of sleep ;
Their steeds, their minds, in prayer throughout the
 night,
Forced to exert themselves beyond their might,
Are worn to death when breaks the morning light ;
Plunged in the ocean of their love and zeal,
No difference 'twixt night and day they feel ;
Excited by the Maker's beauty, they
Despise the beauty human forms display ;
Outward appearances the sage disdains,
A fool regards them, wanting sense and brains.
He who both worlds forgets, his thoughts on high,
Hath drank the wine of love and unity.

STORY III.

AN aged man his vigil kept all night,
And suppliant prayed to God at dawn of light ;
An angel brought this message to his ear,
“ In vain you pray to Him, He will not hear ;
Your prayer is not accepted at His gate,
Go your own way disgraced, or weeping wait.”
Again a second night he spent in prayer ;
A pupil, of the circumstance aware,
Said, “ When you see the door is shut why take
Such useless trouble, vain attempts forsake.”
The old man answered, while the tear drops
 rained
Blood red upon his furrowed cheek, “ Oh ! friend,
Although He breaks the bridle in my hand
Think not I will let go the saddle band ;
Hopeless I would have wandered from the way
Had I another pathway seen that day ;
The disappointed beggar has no fear,
Turned from one door he finds another near ;
But I have heard God’s road is not for me,
And yet no other open can I see ! ”

On this, his head in supplication bent,
A voice to his soul's ear this message sent ;
“Thou art accepted, though thou hast no worth,
Save Me thou hast no shelter upon earth.”





DOOR
CHAPTER IV.

HUMILITY.



STORY I.

FROM dust the Holy God created thee,
Servant of God, then, dustlike lowly be,
From envy, pride, and worldliness abstain,
Earth is thy origin—be not like flame ;
The dreadful fire aloft its crest uprears,
Helpless and humble, low the earth appears ;
The fire showed pride, the earth humility,
From that sprung devils, this humanity.

STORY II.

HISTORIANS say that in the ancient days,
When Jesus walked on earth (to Him be praise
There lived a man so bad, so sunk in sin,
That even Satan was ashamed of him ;
The Book contained his name so many times.
No room was left to enter all his crimes

Perished his tree of life, and bore no fruit,
A stupid, cruel, drunken, swinish brute.
Hard by there dwelt a holy devotee,
Known far and wide for strictest piety ;
Each was the marvel of the time and place,
The first of wickedness and this of grace.
Jesus (to Him be praise !) I've heard one day
Forth from the desert came and passed that way ;
~~The~~ recluse, descending from his casement high,
Fell at His feet with proud humility
The lost one gazed with wonder at the sight
Like moth bewildered by the candle's light ;
Surely one gentle touch had reached his heart,
From Him who came to take the sinner's part !
Shrinking with shame, his conscience stricken sore,
As shrinks a beggar at a rich man's door,
Tears of repentance rolling down his face,
For days and nights polluted with disgrace,
With fear and hope, God's mercy to invoke,
In earnest prayer, with bated breath he spoke :
“ My precious life I've wasted day by day,
My opportunities I've thrown away ;
In vice and wickedness surpassed by none,
No single act of goodness have I done ;

Would that like me no mortal e'er might be,
Better by far to die than live like me !
He who in childhood dies is free from blame,
Old age comes not to bow his head with shame ;
Forgive my sins, Creator of the world,
Lest I to blackest depths of hell be hurled."
On that side, lo ! the aged sinner cries,
Not daring heavenward to lift his eyes,
Repentant, weeping, sunk in deep despair,
" Help of the helpless ! hear, oh ! hear my
prayer."

On this, the devotee puffed up with pride,
With visage sour from far the sinner eyed ;
" What brings this ill-starred wretch towards this
place,
Dares he to think himself of man's high race ?
Headlong to fire eternal he has fallen,
His life to lust's foul whirlwind he has given,
His sin-stained soul what good can show that he
Messiah's company should share with me !
I loathe his hateful countenance, and dread
Lest sin's infection to my bosom spread ;
In that great day, when all must present be,
Oh, God ! I pray Thee, raise him not with me."

From the all glorious God a message came
To Jesus (ever blessed be His name !)
“ The ignorant and learned both are saved,
Both I accept since both to me have prayed ;
The lost one, humbled, with repentant tears
Has cried to me, his cry has reached my ears ;
Who helpless lowly seeks, and doth not doubt
The mercy seat, shall never be cast out ;
His many wicked deeds I have forgiven,
My boundless mercy bringeth him to Heaven ;
And should the devotee on that great day
Think it disgrace in heaven with him to stay,
Tell him, Beware ! they take thee not to hell
And him to paradise with God to dwell.”

The sinner's bleeding heart in anguish sighs,
The saint upon his piety relies,
Doth he not know that God resisteth pride,
But takes the low in spirit to His side ?
Whose heart is vile, but outside fair to see,
For him hell's gates yawn wide, he wants no
key,
Humility in His sight is more meet
Than strict religious forms and self conceit ;

Thy self esteem but proves how bad thou art,
For egotism with God can have no part ;
Boast not thyself—however swift his pace,
Not every skilful rider wins the race.
Wise men have left for all this saying true,
And Saadi in this tale remindeth you,
The sinner penitent hath less to fear
Than he whose piety is not sincere.

STORY III.

OFt have I heard that once when Bayazid
Came from his bath the morning of the Eed¹
Some careless hand threw from a terrace high
A lot of dirt on him as he passed by ;
His hair and turban filled with dust, he said
With saddened face and hands in prayer upraised,
“ Oh ! soul, deserving of hell fire, and now
These harmless ashes make you knit your brow
The truly great from selfishness are free,
Who looks to self, sees not the Deity ;

¹ The festival in commemoration of Abraham offering his son Ishmail (as believed by Mahomedans).

Greatness does not from fame and talking spring,
Pretentious boasting does not highness bring ;
Humility will raise the man of worth,
But pride will cast the haughty to the earth ;
The proud fall headlong from their high estate,
Seek not for greatness if you would be great.

STORY IV.

WHO followeth ~~M'Aroof~~ must first decide
Humbly to put all thought of fame aside.
A guest came to his house and shelter begged.
So worn with sickness he was nearly dead ;
His head and face of hair and beauty bare,
So ill, his life hung on a single hair,
There he his pillow placed, resolved to stay,
And groaning, moaning, passed the night away ;
He neither slept himself nor would he let
His neighbour sleep, rest for a moment get ;
His nature cross-grained from his earliest breath,
He would not die, but worried men to death ;

~~M'Aroof~~ of Kirkh, a celebrated saint ; the word signifies
“ known.”

Always complaining, restless day and night,
Now up, now down ; the people took to flight ;
At last the villagers all ran away,
With the sick man ~~M'Aroof~~ alone would stay
For many nights he waited on his guest,
And swift to do his bidding, got no rest ;
One night sleep conquered him, man has not power
Long to resist his welcome conqueror.
Scarcely one moment had he slumbered when
The fretful traveller his abuse began ;
“ May curses light upon this race abhorred,
Deceitful as the wind, defiled with fraud,
They trade in piety, high creeds profess,
Deceivers clothed in piety's pure dress ;
This fellow, drunk with sleep, nor cares nor knows
I am so weak my eyelids never close.”
Such impious and unjust words he used,
And for a brief neglect his friend abused
The generous sheikh forgave the ungrateful word
His wives within the harem overheard ;
One angry to ~~M'Aroof~~ in private said,
“ Did you not hear the speech that grumbler made ?
Go, tell him to begone, and find elsewhere
Some other place in which to die and swear ;

Kindness and mercy to the good belong,
But kindness to a wicked man is wrong ;
Place not a pillow for a mean man's head,
~~THE~~ oppressor on a stone should have his bed ;
In giving good for bad why ever toil,
Only a fool plants trees in barren soil ?
I say not from all kindliness abstain,
From wasting it on worthless men refrain.
Men pet the cat and not the dog,¹ then why
Behave to this rough brute so courteously ?
And yet in truth a faithful dog excels
A man in whom a thankless nature dwells ;
Your mercy to the mean is without bound,
As one throws rare iced water on the ground,
Write it on ice, what recompense is found !
I never saw a man so cross as he,
No longer pity this nonentity."
He laughed and said, " My wife, my heart's delight,
Be not annoyed at what he said in spite,
Although his temper pours on me abuse,
The unkind words displease not, are of use ;
We ought to bear the tyranny of those
Who from their restlessness get no repose ;

¹ Eastern and Englishmen differ in taste.

He who is happy, strong, and free as air,
With thanks to God the weak man's load should bear;
Who live emotionless, men's grief deny,
Their names and titles with their bodies die ;
Whoever has the tree of kindness reared
Shall surely pluck its fruit, a name revered."

In Kirkh how many graves are scattered round—
Except ~~M'Arroo's~~ not one of note is found ;
Men rise to riches, honour, and renown,
Who first have thrown away pride's hateful crown ;
The proud who worship pomp, the poor despise,
Know not in clemency true grandeur lies.



RESIGNATION.

STORY I.

OUR happiness is given by God alone,
And by strong arms and fingers is not won ;
When heaven refuses thee fair fortune's smile
Thy bravest efforts cannot her beguile ;
The ant, so weakly, fears not hunger's pangs ;
Lions would starve dependent on their fangs ;
We cannot reach the heavens with our hands,
Then must remain content with its commands ;
If God hath granted thee a good old age
Fear not the snake, the sword, the lion's rage ;
And if thy brief existence is His will,
Poison or antidote alike will kill ;
The mighty Rustam was by Shagad killed
When his allotted time he had fulfilled.

STORY II.

A VERY poor man lost his last dinar
And long he searched for it both near and far,
At length he gave up hope and turned away—
A stranger passing found it where it lay.
This was not chance ; He wrote our evil doom
Or happiness, when in the mother's womb ;
We eat not by our strength, by God are fed,
The strongest often want their daily bread !

STORY III.

A FOOLISH vulture boasted to a kite
Nothing can equal me in strength of sight ;
Answered the kite, This power we ought to try,
Come, let us view the desert from on high.
For a whole day their circling course they fly,
And reach the highest regions of the sky ;
The vulture gazing downwards said, " One grain,
Though you may doubt, I see upon the plain !"
The kite's astonishment removed his doubts,
Prone to the earth they swoop like thunderbolts ;

No sooner had the vulture reached the bait,
Than round him fell the certain net of fate ;
He little knew, that single grain of wheat
Was placed by heaven a snare to catch his feet
Each shell contains not in its chamber dark
A pearl ; not always arrows hit the mark ;
What use is it a grain of wheat to see
And not the trap laid by thine enemy ?
The vulture said, his neck within the noose,
“ Cautious against our fate is of no use
When death’s fell hands to take thy life arise,
Fate shuts the piercing atom-seeing eyes ;
In such an ocean, with no shore to gain,
The proudest swimmer’s efforts are in vain.





Drar

~~CHAPTER~~ VI.

CONTENTMENT.



STORY I.

MEN with their lot and portion discontent
Have not known God, are disobedient ;
Say to the grasping ever restless, know
That riches boundless from contentment flow ;
Unstable mind be firm, and stand alone,
No moss is gathered by the rolling stone ;
If wise love not thy flesh, restrain its will,
Unless you do, that thing you love you kill ;
Wise men devote themselves to virtue's call,
The body cherisher in virtue's small ;
•He in his nature manly hath become
Who first his doglike passions hath o'ercome ;
Only to eat and sleep is like the beasts,
Only the fool is satisfied with these.

Happy that favoured one, devout, content,
Food for his earthly journey to him sent ;
O'er those to whom God hath his secret told,
Errors or falsehood have no power or hold :
But those who know not darkness from the light,
Houri and Satan equal in their sight,
Alike the path of light the gulf of sin,
Themselves have thrown themselves that gulf within ;
How shall thy mind to heaven like falcon speed
When round its neck is tied the stone of greed !
When thou hast freed thy skirts from lust's foul powers,
Then shalt thou soar aloft to heavenly bowers ;
By moderate eating, if thy custom here,
Thy mind to that of angels will be near ;
~~How can thy steps material lead to heaven,~~
~~Thou hast no wings thou can'st not fly to heaven,~~
~~First cleanse thyself, adopt a manly mind,~~
~~Then hope to approach the angels with that mind~~
Thou sittest a steed, a fiery wilful foe
Beware ! he'll snatch his head from thy control,
~~And if the bridle breaks from out thy hand~~
~~Thy body dies, thy blood is sprinkled round ;~~
Eat in accordance with thy wants, so far,
Fill not thyself as if thou wert a jar !

Within 's the seat of mental food and praise,
You deem it meant for earthly food always ;
The body worshipper can never see
That a full body is from wisdom free ;
To satisfy your lust you try in vain,
Then let it empty hungering remain/
Like hell, the more the fuel is supplied
It cries, More ! more ! it's never satisfied
A slave to sin, with food the ass supplies,
While hungry thin, his soul his Jesus dies ;
Base one ! give not for wealth religion good,
The Saviour's gospel for thy ass's food.
The wandering beasts of ~~th~~ earth, the birds of
~~th~~ air,
Only through greed can fall into the snare ;
The leopard proudly holds o'er beasts the sway,
He, like the mouse, through eating falls a prey.

STORY II.

A CHILD had cut his teeth—the father bowed
His head in anxious care, and thought aloud,
I can't abandon him, he must be fed,
Myself so poor, whence shall I bring him bread ?
When to his wife his doubts and fears he broke,
Listen how bravely trustfully she spoke ;
“ Fear not the tempter, He who life doth give,
And teeth, will give him bread that he may live ;
Fret not thyself, the Giver of all good,
The Lord of power can send him daily food ;
He shaped the infant's form before his birth,
Decreed his sustenance, his age on earth ;
A man who buys a slave will care for him,
How much more He who made will care for him !
Thou trustest less thy Heavenly Master than
A slave will trust his master though a man
Hast thou not heard that saints, in days of old,
Esteemed of equal value stones and gold ?
The saying seemeth senseless, but 'tis meant,
That gold and stones are one to him content
To him whose mind from avarice is free,
Silver and dust of equal worth will be ;

Tell that darvesh whose frailty worships kings,
Poorer than he they are in heavenly things ;
One coin contents the beggar—Faridoon
Was half content on Persia's haughty throne ;
Great troubles wait on wealth and royalty,
Beggars are kings, their title, poverty !
A beggar light of heart is happier far
Than kings whose happiness is drowned in care ;
Sleep brings the labourer that grateful rest
Unknown to thronéd kings with care oppressed,
When slumber's ^{rising} ~~soothing~~ flood ^{submerges} ~~subdues~~ the sense,
'Twixt king and peasant, say, what difference !
Beloved sleep ! the careworn high and low
Beneath thy gentle sway forget their woe !
Whene'er, oh ! destitute, the rich you view
Puffed up with pride, give thanks to God that you,
All praise to Him, have never had the power
To add to others' griefs one bitter hour !

STORY III.

THEY say a certain man, both good and wise,
Built a small house, though suited to his size,
Men said to him, " We know that you can well
Afford a better house in which to dwell ;"
He answered, " Why should I a palace raise
Since in this hut content I pass my days ? "
Build not, my friend, upon the torrent's road,
This world to none has proved a sure abode ;
The caravan that makes a dwelling place
On the wayside, wants common sense and grace.



DOOR
~~CHAPTER~~ VII.

CULTIVATION AND GOOD MANNERS.



STORY I.

A SIMPLE good darvesh, his friends among,
Had passed for wise because he held his tongue ;
Sages from far and near around him came,
Like moths attracted by the candle's flame ;
He thought one night, in meditation lone,
" The merits of the silent are unknown,
Unless I speak I shall be thought a sham,
No one will know how good and wise I am !
He spoke ; each man, or friend or enemy,
Knew there was one still greater fool than he !
His dignity and occupation gone
He fled, and wrote a Musjid's wall upon—
" Could I, as in a glass, myself have seen,
I would not thus have torn away the screen ;

I thought myself well favoured, now I know
The hideous face ~~th~~ uplifted veil doth show."

A silent man of sound repute should be,
A fool whose speech exposes him should flee ;
Silence is honourable in the wise
And for the ignorant a good disguise.
Oh Sage ! to crush the ignorant forbear ;
Oh Ignorant ! thy curtain do not tear ;
Do not disclose your heart's desire too soon,
Whene'er it suits you, you can make it known,
But when a man his secret has proclaimed,
Try how he will it cannot be reclaimed ;
The pen the secret of the king conceals,
And till the knife hath trimmed it naught reveals.
Mankind alone hath speech, the beasts are dumb,
And silly talkers worse than beasts become ;
Speech should be grave and rare, or like the brute
Men should refrain from talking and be mute ;
Endowed with language and intelligence,
Why like a parrot chatter without sense ?

STORY II.

A HANDSOME, loving, chaste, obedient wife,
Maketh a man a king, though poor in life ;
Go, happy man, proclaim it far and near,
There nestles in thine arms a partner dear ;
Grieve not when daily toils are multiplied,
Night bringeth thy Grief-sharer to thy side.
Surely God's favour is on him bestowed
Whose wife makes glad and prospers his abode ;
To him it is a heaven on earth to see
His wife who adds to beauty chastity.
That man has gained his heart's desire whose wife
His heart's consoler dwelleth without strife.
If she is chaste and has a good address,
Mark not her beauty or her ugliness ;
Better a merry heart than pretty face,
Her sympathy will hide her want of grace,
Whether her husband treats her well or ill
Her cheerful nature keeps her happy still
Prefer the ugly with affection warm
To one bad tempered but with fairy form ;
May thy choice on a gentle woman fall,
And from the wicked, God protect us all !

And from the

From such you strive to flee, in fear and rage,
Like a poor parrot in a raven's cage ;
To run away, ~~to~~ escape to far off lands,
In vain, in vain, resigned, you fold your hands ;
A prison house is better far I ween
Than thine own house where knitted brows are seen ;
Even travel is to him a holyday
Who sees domestic trouble every day ;
All happiness is vanished from that house
Whence comes the clamour of a scolding spouse ;
The wife who gads and gossips, beat her well
Or in thine own house like a woman dwell
Tell that weak man whose wife doth not devote
Her will to his, Go ! wear a petticoat !
Who brings an evil woman to his bed,
A dire misfortune, not a wife has wed ;
Once doubted she can ne'er his trust regain,
The heap of wheat is judged by one bad grain !
Should she her brazen face to strangers show,
All boast of manliness he must forego ;
And if she sinks to woman's last disgrace,
Tell her to slap her cuckold husband's face.
May she whose eyes on strangers look, be blind,
And she who gads, death's retribution find ;

When once a wife is disobedient,
Farewell to reason and to argument,
Escape ! though in the dragon's mouth you fly,
Better than live a life of shame to die
How apt the saying of two men, whose wives
Had made them sick and weary of their lives ;
One groaned, Why do men marry ! and the other,
Why are there women in the world to bother !
Take a new wife, my friend, with each new year,
A last year's almanack is stale and drear ;
Bare feet are better than tight shoes, the load
Of travel than a quarrelsome abode.
Many, Oh ! Saadi, do their marriage rue,
Deride them not, for you have suffered too.¹

¹ Saadi in one of his wanderings was captured by robbers, and sold as a slave ; while at work one day, he was recognised by an old acquaintance who redeemed him from his captivity for a small sum, say, 10*l.* ; his friend took him to his house, and after a time married his daughter to him, giving her a dowry of, say, 100*l.* Saadi appears to have been a bit of a Bohemian, the woman was a shrew, and the marriage was not happy one ; one day, she was nagging at him, and said, " Who are you ? " Saadi answered, " I am that unhappy man whom your father bought for 10*l.* and sold to you for 100*l.* "

STORY III.

TAKASH a secret to his slaves revealed
With strict injunctions it should be concealed
They kept it locked up in their hearts a year,
But one day it was published far and near ;
Takash enraged, all pity put away,
And ordered them to death without delay ;
One of them cried, " Forgive us, mighty king,
And kill us not—from you the fault did spring.
You did not stop the fountain at its head,
To try is useless now the flood has spread."

Tell not your secrets to your dearest friend,
Lest he in turn should tell them to his friend
Entrust your treasurer with your ~~jewell-ry~~,
But of your secrets your own guardian be.
A word unspoken in your power remains,
Once spoken, over you the mastery gains ;
Let not the demon speech, hid in the soul,
Escape its portals and defy control ;
You can, and do release it, but no plan,
No stratagem can bring it back again ;

A child can free the tethered horse, which loose
A hundred warriors will fail to noose ;
Be careful, guarded in your speech, lest some
Misfortune caused by it on others come.

STORY IV.

KING Azad's son was very sick, 'tis said,
And patience from the father's bosom fled ;
A pious kindly man advised, set free
His caged up birds, give them their liberty ;
The cages of the forest birds that wake
The smiling morn with cheerful voice they break,
The prison burst, who would not freedom take !
But kept within the palace garden bound
One nightingale for sweetest voice renowned ;
The youth towards his garden strolled next day,
Except this bird, his pets had flown away ;
He laughed, Oh ! bulbul, breathing melody,
Thine own voice keeps thee in captivity !

If you speak not, men will not interfere,
But if you speak, be sure your reason's clear ;
Like Saadi, who so long from speech refrained,
And from the gossip's tattle safe remained.

That man secures his rest and ease of mind
Who shuns society, avoids mankind ;
If thou art wise, make not men's errors known,
Devote thyself to thinking of thine own ;
Give not thy ear to sayings frivolous,
Avert thine eyes from seeing nakedness.





~~CHAPTER~~ VIII.

GRATITUDE.



STORY I.

BEHOLD thy finger ! how with Euclid's skill
So many parts are framed their parts to fill ;
Who at God's work that finger points with scorn
Must be a madman, or an idiot born.
~~Think of a man, how grand his movements are,~~
~~How many bones for this well fitted are ;~~
Smoothly must move the ancles, feet, and knees,
That you may bend your footsteps where you please ;
With many joints, not one, thy loins are built,
Hence adoration is not difficult ;
This complex body, made from earth, contains
Innumerable muscles, bones, and veins,
Eyesight, and thought, discrimination clear,
Limbs with the mind, the mind with knowledge dear.

The wretched beasts with down turned faces walk
You, "Alif"¹ like, upon your feet can stalk,
Ignobly they bend down the head to eat,
With honour you bring to your mouth your meat ;
Ill it befits thee with such dignity,
Except in praise of God to bow the knee
Although is given thee this form divine,
Be not puffed up, to gentle thoughts incline.
~~To th' upright walk in life, not upright form,~~
~~Are not the infidels like us in form ?~~
Who gave the mouth to speak, and ears, and eyes,
Against him do not strive, if thou art wise.
Against thy foe thou would'st not throw a clod,
Then fight not ignorantly with thy God.
Wise natures, recognizing kindly deeds,
Secure with thanks men's kindness in their needs.

STORY II.

THE night and day to please thee alternate,
And moon and sun in turn illuminate,

¹ The letter "Alif" (ا) is often used to symbolise uprightness.

The heavens, as they who lay a carpet, spread
O'er earth the joys of spring for thee to tread ;
Storms, rain, and hail may come, the lightning flash,
The rolling thunder sound in answering crash ;
All are His agents, bound to do His will,
And nurse the seed you sow, the ground you till ;
Fear not the pangs of thirst, His watermen, ¹
The clouds, bring on their backs abundant rain ;
The earth produces colours, food, and scents,
A pleasure ground for vision, taste, and sense ;
The bees give honey, gentle dew the skies,
Date bearing palms from stony seeds arise,
And gardeners, mortals, wondering bite the hand
To see such trees spring up at His command.
Sun, moon, and pleiades, He made for thee,
Lanterns to light thy home, earth's canopy/
For thee the deer yields musk, the thorn a rose,
The mine its wealth, from dry wood verdure grows ;
With His own hand thine eyes and brow He traced,
Lest by strange hands thy form might be defaced ;
Th¹ Almighty cherishes thy fragile frame
With bounty ever changing without name ;

¹ Alluding to the way in which water is carried in skins slung over the ~~right~~ shoulder and resting on the loins.

In vain the tongue alone to thank Him strives,
Each moment we should thank Him with our lives.
When I, Thy gifts unspeakable behold,
Oh ! Lord, my eyes are dimmed, my heart grows cold.
Not only birds, and beasts, earth's insect swarm,
But heavenly beings in angelic form,
Of thanks Thy due, have but a portion shown ;
Perhaps of myriads they have rendered one !
Go Saadi, close thy book, thy mind unbend,
And walk not in a path that hath no end.

STORY III.

He first within my heart placed good intent,
And I, His slave, before His threshold bent ;
Except the good He teaches in His grace
None can exist among the human race ;
The tongue allows it, but no praise can claim,
For see ! from Him the gift of language came ;
Men's eyes by which both heaven and earth are seen
Are doors that let His knowledge enter in ;
All learning would be hidden from mankind
Had He not made these doorways to the mind ;

He made from nothing, when He bade us live,
The head for worship and the hand to give ;
Nor head nor hand these duties could fulfil
Had He not so ordained it by His will ;
He made the tongue and ear that they might be
Of the mind's chest the ever ready key ;
No one would know the secrets of the heart,
Could not the tongue its tale in speech impart ;
Unless the ear conveyed intelligence,
Spylike, it could not reach the monarch sense ;
Like porters at our reason's door, they bring
The thoughts from mind to mind, from king to king ;
Think not thou can'st do well thyself, for, see !
Thine acts are ordered by Divine decree ;
The royal gardeners can only show
Those fruits that in the royal gardens grow.



DOOR.

~~CHAPTER~~ IX.

PENANCE.



STORY I.

TO-DAY, Oh ! youth, the path of duty tread,
When old thou'lt find thy time of vigour fled ;
When thou art strong, thy mind devoid of care,
Thy plan of action in this world prepare,
As o'er the level sward, with certain aim,
A player drives the ball and wins the game ;
I did not know the value of each day,
But now I see that they were thrown away ;
The time has passed of which each fleeting hour
Might, had I chosen, have been my Night of Power.¹
See how the laden ass creeps slowly on,
You, mounted on a courser swift, press on

¹ Night of Power, when the Quran began to descend from heaven ; Mahommedans believe that all prayers offered on the anniversary of this night will be answered.

However well the broken vase you mend,
Its former worth can never be regained/
Still, since thy careless hand hath let it fall,
It must be mended to be used at all
Neglect hath cast thee into Jihoon's ¹ tide,
Yet strike out manfully to gain the side ;
The swift of foot may pass thee in the race,
Still, falling, stumbling, ever onwards press ;
Although with such thou never can'st compete,
Still sit not down, though reft of hands and feet.

STORY II.

IN Sanaa died my child, my darling son—
My grief, and misery why dwell upon ?
E'en as the whale, forgetting its true prey,
Jonah the sinning prophet snatched away ;
So death insatiate, though the old abound,
Seizes the young with Joseph's ² beauty crowned.

here means misfortune.

The Mahommedans believe that Joseph was the perfection of manly beauty.

The blast of death tears up the sweetest flower,
To be but beauteous is to tempt his power ;
Why wonder that on earth blooms fresh the rose
When rose-like bodies in that earth repose !
Remorseful, crazed, I thought, Oh ! wretched man,
The young die pure, the old man stained with sin ;
I tore away the stone, with frenzy wild,
That envious covered my beloved child
Awe of that narrow chamber black as night
Stopped my heart's pulse, my cheeks grew pale with
fright.

When, hush ! what gentle voice is this I hear,
That soothes my surging passion, calms my fear ;
Father ! if fearful of this gloomy place,
Be wise, and lighten it with deeds of grace ;
Light as the day thy grave will seem to thee
If thou wilt bring the lamp of charity
The idle gardener frets, but surely sees
That no bloom grows on his neglected trees ;
Many there are, with expectation vain,
Who wish a harvest having sown no grain
Saadi ! he eats the fruit who plants the tree,
Who sows the seed his shall the harvest be.

STORY III.

A pious, kindly natured man passed by
A wretch confirmed in sin and infamy,
Who blushing, cowering, said, "I dare not meet
Through shame, my Sheikh, my pastor, in the
street ;"

The good man heard, and thus, with pity moved,
The youth in stern but righteous words reprov'd .
"Hast thou so little shame, that me you fear,
And not ~~th~~ Almighty who is ever near !
No man can give thee ease and peace of mind,
Go, look to God alone, and mercy find ;
Have for your God at least the shame you show
To relatives and strangers here below."



DOOR.
~~CHAPTER~~ X.

PRAYER, SUBMISSION, RESIGNATION.



STORY I.

I TREMBLE when the prayer I call to mind
Of a devoted one at Mecca's shrine ;
In bitter grief he cried to God and said,
Cast me not out, save Thee I have no aid ;
With scorn rejected, or received with grace,
Thy threshold is my only resting place ;
Thou knowest how weak ^{vain}, how powerless
~~How conquered by imperious lust I am,~~
Lust domineering rushes on, in vain
Doth sober reason strive to grasp the rein ;
Who can o'ercome his passions' devilish might !
Can tiny ants with raging lions fight !
By those already in Thy path I pray,
Oh ! God, that Thou wilt show to me Thy way,
And from my sins protect me day by day.

Almighty ! by Thy nature, pure, divine,
Thy peerless titles, passing man's design,
Medina's pilgrims' joyous " We are here,"¹
By him Thy prophet who lies buried there,
The war cry of Thy warriors in whose sight
Thy foemen are as women in the fight,
By the devotion that adorns the old,
The truth that marks the youth in duty bold,
In death's dread whirlpool keep me from the shame
Of thinking aught but Thee can bear Thy name.²
I humbly trust the righteous who obey
Will intercede for us who disobey ;
I pray Thee, by the pure to keep me pure,
And when a sin defiles me, pass it o'er.
By those whose backs are bowed in prayer intent,
Whose eyes through shame are ever downwards bent,
Shut not mine eyes from seeing happiness,
Close not my mouth from giving my defence ;
Place in my path the Faith's unwavering light ;
Hold back my hand from deeds that are not right ;
Avert my sight, my thoughts, from vanity ;
Give me no power to work iniquity ;

¹ When pilgrims come in sight of Medina, where Mohammed is buried, they shout, " Oh ! God we are present," &c.

A speck ! how can I hope to share Thy love,
My life or death is one to Thee above !
Shed from Thy sun of grace one ray on me,
One favour is enough from Royalty ;
Drive me not from Thy gates in shame and tears,
For saving Thine no other door appears ;
Though long I've wandered, in Thy law unlearned,
Reject me not, since now I have returned ;
Ashamed, polluted, I can bring no plea,
Save, Independent One ! my misery ;
Judge not the sinful deeds I've done, the wrong,
The weak expect compassion from the strong ;
Why do I weep my wretched abject state !
As I am weak so is my shelter great !
Through sinful negligence man broke the vow,
His strongest efforts to Thy will must bow ;
When all his best laid plans have come to naught,
One prayer remains, Oh ! God, forgive my fault.

STORY II.

RAISE we our hands and hearts in prayer to-day,
For soon they may be powerless in the clay ;
The mightiest trees in autumn time behold,
Stripped of their foliage by the bitter cold ;
Who raise to Him their empty hands and pray,
Are never empty-handed sent away ;
Be sure, no suppliant turns dissatisfied
From Mercy's doorway ever opened wide
The needy supplicate, all men adore,
Come ! at His shrine who cherishes the poor ;
Our hands like barren branches let us raise,
We must not henceforth fruitless pass our days,
Almighty God ! with clemency look down
On us Thy servants, for our sins are known
Nourished, All Bountiful ! with daily food,
Used to Thy gentleness, Thy gifts so good,
We still, Thy creatures lower than the dust,
Thankless sin on, and still for pardon trust
Beggars who gifts and kindly words receive
Will never more their benefactor leave ;
Since in this fleeting world Thou hold'st me dear,
Why in the next should I Thy favour fear !

Disgrace or honour, both by Thee are sent,
Whate'er Thou sendest me I am content,
Beloved by Thee I heed not man's contempt.
Lord ! for Thine honour's sake, disgrace me not,
With vileness unforgiven shame me not,
Place not a ruler like me over me,
My punishment is lighter if from Thee ;
No evil in this world is greater than
To bear oppression from a fellow man !
Let it suffice that in Thy presence dread
I blush, of others make me not afraid ;
Protected, shadowed by Thy gracious love,
My head is higher than the heaven above ;
When God bestows on me a heavenly crown,
And holds me up, no one can cast me down.

